

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 L-03 NSC-05 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4633

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 6294

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJ: ARREST OF ATTORNEY TEFERI BERHANE

REF: STATE 121773

1. IN RESPONSE TO REFTTEL, ETHIOPIAN HERALD OF MAY 28 REPORTED THAT REASONS FOR TEFERI AND HIS PARTNER BEKELE ATTEMPTING TO LEAVE ETHIOPIA WERE TWO-FOLD: NATIONALIZATION OF LAND WITH CONSEQUENT END TO LAND RELATED LITIGATION HAD BLOCKED THEIR FLOW OF REVENUE. SECONDLY, NEITHER HAD BEEN APPOINTED AS JUDGE, OR TO ANY OTHER POSITION, AS THEY HAD HOPED. HERALD ARTICLE CONTINUES THAT THE TWO WERE CAPTURED WITH THEIR WIVES AND SEVEN CHILDREN ALONG WITH ETH\$14,000 AND US\$5,000 AS WELL AS AN ETH\$11,000 KENYA-US AIR TICKET.

2. ABOVE MAY BE STORY THAT LAWYERS HAD GIVEN POLICE, SINCE HERALD ARTICLE WAS REPRINTED FROM POLICE, SINCE HERALD ARTICLE WAS REPRINTED FROM POLICE GAZETTE. HOWEVER, THEIR REAL REASONS ARE BELIEVED TO BE DISENCHANTMENT WITH DIRECTION OF CURRENT REGIME AND TO LESSER DEGREE, DIFFICULT POSITION THAT BOTH MEN, AS ERITREANS IN ADDIS ABABA, FOUND THEMSELVES IN.

3. APPARENTLY TWO CHARGES AGAINST MEN ARE FIRST ATTEMPTING TO TAKE CURRENCY OUT OF THE COUNTRY ILLEGALLY, PUNISHMENT FOR WHICH IS UP TO THREE YEARS IMPRISONMENT AND CONFISCATION OF THE CURRENCY IN QUESTION. SECOND CHARGE IS ALLEGEDLY THAT THEY
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ATTEMPTED TO "ESCAPE THE COUNTRY" ILLEGALLY (WITHOUT VISAS?).

WE HAVE NO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AS TO DISPOSITION OF THEIR
CASES NOR TRIAL DATES. WE WILL REPORT FURTHER AS
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE.
HUMMEL

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NNN

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